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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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PRE-GENEVA CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - I

Participation in Korean Political Conference: Peiping and Pyongyang radios announced on 3 March that Communist China and North Korea have accepted invitations from the Soviet Union to attend the Korean peace conference at Geneva beginning on 26 April. The Turkish government on 27 February decided to attend the conference. This is the only acceptance to the US invitations so far reported.

South Korea is still undecided on participation. On 1 March Foreign Minister Pyun told Ambassador Briggs that it would be futile for the United States and South Korea to discuss conference tactics until it had been decided whether South Korea would attend. Briggs has commented that Rhee and Pyun have apparently decided to play hard to get.

In a public statement on 1 March, Rhee asserted his long-standing conviction that the conference will fail to unify Korea. Earlier, Foreign Minister Pyun told Briggs that simultaneous discussions of Korea and Indochina would enable Communist China to sidetrack Korea and make propaganda, on its own terms, over Southeast Asia. Despite this argumentation, South Korea will probably agree to attend, and there is some indication that the government is selecting its representatives.

Paris reportedly will agree to cease-fire proposal: On 3 March the French cabinet agreed, according to press sources, that France would accept Nehru's proposal for an immediate cease-fire in Indochina "if adequate guarantees can be obtained for the safety of the French expeditionary corps and for persons friendly to France." Premier Laniel is expected to announce on 5 March what the minimum guarantees will be. Other reports indicate, however, that France will not take the initiative in offering a cease-fire, but rather indicate what would be acceptable from Ho as an offer.

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Propaganda: Soviet comment on the Geneva conference has devoted particular attention to Communist China's role, but has failed to indicate clearly probable Communist strategy. Pravda states that the invitation to Peiping marked a "new approach" to the solution of international problems and actually meant Communist China's recognition as a great power.

Moscow emphasizes Indochina much more than Korea, leaving no doubt that one of Molotov's chief aims in agreeing to the Geneva parley was to block possible increased American aid to France and the Vietnamese. Soviet commentators have warned that "aggressive forces in the West" want the conference to fail and that "positive results" can be achieved only if final settlements in both Korea and Indochina are based on the "lawful interests of Asian peoples fighting for their freedom and independence."

Chinese Communist comment, which reflects Peiping's apparent belief that Geneva will be a major step toward its general acceptance in the international community, consistently presents the Berlin agreement as one for a "Five-Power" conference and obscures the differences between the original Soviet proposal and the final agreement. Peiping asserts that the Berlin decision vindicates its contention that China's voice "cannot be ignored" on world, and especially Far Eastern, matters. The Chinese Communists have also made propaganda preparations for placing on the United States the onus for failure to reach agreements on major issues.

Pyongyang has offered the most specific comment on the conference, explicitly reiterating previous demands for ultimate unification under the North Korean regime, the settlement of the Korean issue by the "Korean people themselves," the withdrawal of foreign troops, and the participation of "Asian neutrals" in discussions to "facilitate" a solution to the Korean question.

While there has been only limited Viet Minh reaction to the Geneva conference, Viet Minh has newly emphasized charges that the United States is responsible for continuing the war in Indochina. A broadcast on 3 March by Ho Chi Minh charged the United States with violating the sovereignty of the Associated States and the United States Air Force with aiding in the "massacre" of the Indochinese people.

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